



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **KENNARD FIREFIGHTER CHARGED WITH ARSON**

(Beaumont, TX) United States Attorney Matthew D. Orwig announced that a 33-year-old Kennard firefighter has been indicted for arson in the Eastern District of Texas. **RYAN JAMES EFF** has been charged with setting numerous arson fires in the Davy Crockett National Forest.

U.S. Attorney Orwig commended investigators for solving this difficult case, "While Forest Service firefighters put their lives at risk and worked tirelessly to extinguish the fires, they realized a number of them were a result of criminal activity by one of their own."

According to the indictment, Eff was employed as a firefighter for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and assigned to perform firefighter duties in the federally owned Davy Crockett National Forest. Eff is charged with intentionally setting 23 arson fires in locations in or near the Davy Crockett National Forest from about May 2005 to April 2006. During each of these fires, USFS personnel responded and worked to suppress and extinguish the fires using aircraft and heavy equipment in extremely dangerous conditions. Eff is believed to be responsible for destroying at least 345 acres of federal lands and 133 acres of privately owned property. There was no loss of structures or report of injuries as a result of these fires.

Eff has resigned his position with the USFS and as a volunteer firefighter for the Kennard Volunteer Fire Department.

Eff faces up to 40 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000 if convicted. It is

important to note that an indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of either guilt or innocence.

The case is being investigated by the USFS and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Malcolm Bales.

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